

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed project in Virginia coastal waters.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

November 13, 2012 to December 4, 2012

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing a proposed federal action to determine if it is consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCP) established pursuant to the U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act. The VCP seeks to protect the quality of air, water or other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT:

DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to implement Framework Adjustment 7 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish (MSB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Framework Adjustment 7 changes the butterfish mortality cap on the longfin squid fishery from a "catch" (landings and discards) cap to a "discard" cap. The butterfish mortality cap is intended to reduce fishing mortality to the butterfish stock. Butterfish discards in the longfin squid fishery account for the largest source of butterfish fishing mortality. The cap currently limits butterfish catch (both landings and discards) on directed longfin squid trips. In response to new information that suggests increased butterfish abundances, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) has recommended a much higher butterfish quota for the 2013 fishing year. The increased quota would allow for a directed butterfish fishery for the first time in recent years. The Council proposes to change the butterfish mortality cap from a "catch" cap to a "discard" cap in Framework 7 to accommodate the new directed fishery. NMFS believes that the proposed adjustment will not have any impact on fishing or fishing behavior and is primarily administrative in nature. Accordingly, NMFS believe the proposed action will have no coastal effects and has submitted a negative determination pursuant to 15 CFR 930, § 930.35.

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

NAME; John E. Fisher
DEQ Central Office
Office of Environmental Impact Review
629 East Main Street, Room 633
Richmond, Virginia, 23219;

Phone: (804) 698-4339
Fax: (804) 698-4319
E-mail: john.fisher@deq.virginia.gov